

Dicae and *faciae* from Cato to Quintilian: Morphological variants or orthographical practice?

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In two passages of his *Institutio Oratoria* (*Inst.* I 7,23; IX 4,39), Quintilian mentions a practice of Cato the Elder, who wrote *dicae* and *faciae* (or *dice* and *facie*) in the place of the classical forms *dicam* and *faciam*. Quintilian's citation triggered a long-standing controversy regarding the interpretation of these forms, also as a consequence of two different readings in the manuscript tradition. Some scholars accept the readings *dice* and *facie*, and trace them back to variant first-person forms in the future indicative of the third conjugation (**dicem* and **faciem* - not otherwise attested) that are spelled without the final /m/. Other scholars, instead, accept the readings *dicae* and *faciae*, and regard them as an orthographic convention in order to indicate the articulatory weakness of /m/ in word-final intervocalic position. This paper discusses and compares the two competing views, claiming that the former, which is undermined by several critical issues, should be dismissed in favour of the latter, which can also be supported by some palaeographic evidence.